



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Governor's Task Force Spurs Report Shows Energy Efficiency Potential for Wisconsin

MADISON – A new report shows that Wisconsin could save enough electricity through conservation to defer construction of one power plant every five years and to replace enough natural gas to heat as many as 65,000 homes each year.

The draft report issued by the Energy Center of Wisconsin was commissioned by Governor Jim Doyle's Energy Efficiency and Renewables Task Force and presented to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) to show the most cost-effective way Wisconsin businesses and residents can achieve substantial energy savings. The last report on potential energy efficiency savings was updated in 1995.

"The new report will help us set goals for energy efficiency and renewables in the state and shows us the most efficient ways to meet those goals," PSC Chairperson Dan Ebert said. "With the increases we are seeing in fuel costs to generate electricity and heat our homes, we need to look for smart, common sense ways to lower energy demand and to use Wisconsin's home grown resources as a source for energy."

Chairperson Ebert said the next step is for the Legislature to introduce and pass legislation implementing the recommendations of the Governor's Energy Efficiency and Renewables Task Force.

Governor Doyle created a Task Force with members representing customers, environmental concerns, utilities, and labor with the goal of making Wisconsin a leader in energy efficiency and use of renewable resources. One of the major Task Force recommendations requires at least 10 percent of Wisconsin's energy to come from renewable resources by 2015.

In addition, the Task Force recommended improvement and better coordination of the public benefits program. Under the Task Force proposal, the PSC, the agency that oversees electric generation and utilities in the state, would set goals for energy efficiency and renewables to offset dependence on fossil fuels like coal and natural gas. The PSC would also set the funding levels for utility efficiency programs and for the public benefits program, the state-level energy efficiency program run by the Department of Administration, to meet the goals.

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“Under the Task Force recommendations, the two agencies would better coordinate our energy efficiency and renewable efforts in Wisconsin and we would have benchmarks to chart our progress,” Chairperson Ebert pointed out.

The report recommended a maximum spending level of between \$75 and \$120 million per year to meet the achievable energy savings in Wisconsin. Currently, for 2006, the public benefits program is budgeted for \$37 million and the utilities and co-ops will spend another \$40 million.

Chairperson Ebert noted that Wisconsin currently ranks seventh in the nation in the amount the state spends on energy efficiency.

The draft report, "Energy Efficiency and Customer-sited Renewable Energy: Achievable Potential in Wisconsin," is posted on the Governor's Task Force website at:
<http://energytaskforce.wi.gov/section.asp?linkid=34>.

The Energy Center of Wisconsin invites comments on the draft report. Please email comments to sbenzmiller@ecw.org no later than 12:00 p.m. on Monday, October 31, 2005.

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